

ARREST OF EGYPTIAN EDITOR AS AGENT CALLED 'SHOCKING'

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By JIM PICTON

CAIRO — Newsgathering circles all over the Middle East are still shocked by the arrest of the famed Egyptian journalist Mustafa Amin for allegedly spying for the United States. He was arrested in Alexandria along with an American Embassy diplomat named Bruce Taylor Odell. Odell was released after questioning.

The official Middle East News Agency said Odell was a CIA agent and had been getting weekly reports from Mustafa Amin written in Amin's own handwriting, in response to questions he received weekly written in Odell's own handwriting. The State Department has denied that documents were exchanged between Odell and Amin as the MEN

report said. The Department said the only document was a list of questions Odell had in his pocket that he intended to pose to Amin as diplomats do to all kinds of contacts.

To make matters worse, the US Embassy's information department acted like boys caught with their fingers in the cookie jar. Four correspondents only were called in for a statement and even the Americans said the information service people seemed odd about the whole affair. The *London Times* correspondent here called the head of USIS repeatedly and found him not in, and USIS never called back as requested. Another reporter said they seemed more asleep than awake at USIS. All this, of course, helps to dispatch Mustafa Amin, a long friend of the United States, on a long prison sentence.

The property of both Mustafa and his twin brother, Ali Amin, have been sequestered by the government. Ali became the roving correspondent of the *Al Ahram* newspaper after he despaired of seeing the newspaper he and his brother built up, *Al Ahkbar*, go over into the hands of far leftists (see *Bulletin* story, June 12). It is unknown how long Ali will keep his job, but with his outstanding abilities he will surely not be out of work for long. Besides *Al Ahkbar* and a half-dozen magazines, the Amin brothers got the Arabic edition of *Reader's Digest* going strong.

Both Mustafa and Ali Amin have been friends of several generations of OPCers. They have always been helpful news sources in a country where there are precious few news sources. American newsmen here believe that the arrest of Amin will make even the few Egyptians who will discuss world affairs much more cautious of associations with Westerners.